



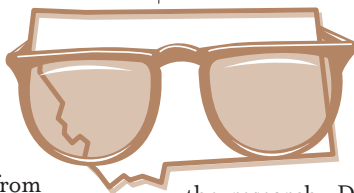
## Image is Everything

The results of a recent image study report commissioned by Travel Montana are now available. The goal of the study, called "Image and Positioning Assessment," was to get a snapshot of the likes and dislikes of the traveling public, understand how potential travelers view the state, and gain insight on what differentiates Montana from its competitors. The following are a few of the specific conclusions and recommendations from the research.

- Currently Montana is viewed as a more natural experience. Montana offers a lot of rugged outdoor activities, but it is not considered as strong in this area as states like Colorado and Oregon. At the same time, both Montana and Wyoming have the image of the quintessential Western destination.

- A review of Montana's current image and that of its competition suggests that the state should market its more developed attractions such as golf, urban attractions, festivals and museums. The key will be identifying the areas that Montana can promote where the product supports the marketing message. Generally, Montana needs to continue to promote itself as a place that offers outdoor activities, but one that has a strong Western Culture along with a bit of sophistication.

"The image we as Montanans have of our state is quite different from those living elsewhere," says Travel Montana Director, Matthew Cohn. "While plenty of improvements have been made since our last commissioned image study in the late '80s, there is still a lot of work to be



done to promote the state. We are involved in a highly competitive situation with states that are similar to ours; we must hone our image and differentiate ourselves from our competitors." Cohn adds that Travel Montana will use this research to formulate marketing strategies for the next few years.

Strategic Marketing and Research Inc. of Indianapolis conducted the research. Denise Miller with SMR will present this report at the 2000 Governor's Conference.

We would like to remind you that it is hard to translate this research into a short newsletter piece. We encourage you to view the entire 50-page report for free on Travel Montana's Intranet site: [travelmontana.state.mt.us/research](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/research).

## Countdown to M2K: The Montana Millennium Year 2000 Governor's Conference

The two-day agenda for the April 10-11, 2000, Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation at Big Sky is set. Twenty-four educational break-out sessions are scheduled to cover topics including the latest Montana travel trends, "Image" and Lewis & Clark

Interest/Awareness survey results, niche markets, rail tours and scenic drives, cultural and heritage tourism strategies, and Montana's tourism "edu-structure" (training opportunities for employees, managers and business owners).

A conference registration brochure and full agenda were mailed out in mid-February. For additional registration packets or information, contact Travel Montana at (406) 444-2654 or download the material from Travel Montana's Intranet site: [travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference).

## News You Can Use

- Cruising for statistics on Montana's tourism industry? Interested in better understanding the role Montana's tourism industry plays in the state? Need to register for the 2000 Governor's Conference? Search no more. Travel Montana's tourism industry website, [travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us), will provide you with up-to-date information about Montana's tourism industry. Since activities, studies and opportunities are constantly changing in the state's tourism industry, we invite you to make [travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us) part of your "favorite site" list.

## Gone But Not Forgotten

Travel Montana says goodbye to two individuals who have played a significant role in the department: Electronic Marketing/Information Services Manager, Shawn Peterson, and Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Chair, Carl Kochman. Shawn will be taking a position at the University of Montana's Information Technology Resource Center, as well as pursuing an Internet consulting business. Carl is stepping down from his TAC post to run newly formed Wendt/Kochman Advertising in Great Falls. Thanks Shawn and Carl for all of your hard work and dedication. Good luck with your new endeavors.

## A Banner Year for Travel Montana Promotion

In an effort to capitalize on the growth of the web, Travel Montana's consumer marketing department has purchased 17 various ads and promotional vehicles in specifically-targeted websites for its "Warm Season" campaign. All of these ads will link to Travel Montana's consumer site, [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com), in hopes that viewers will use the site and travel to the state. According to Consumer Marketing Manager, Suzanne Elfstrom, marketing on the web is a cost-effective tool to reach potential consumers. The program has increased its budget for web-based marketing by 64 percent over 1999.

Some of the banner ads will target the following markets: RV and camping, western history and culture, outdoor enthusiasts, golf and the mature traveler. In addition to banner ads, Travel Montana is pursuing other special types of web promotions on [golfonline.com](http://golfonline.com) and [travelchannel.com](http://travelchannel.com). Various targeted e-mails will also be sent to consumers who have indicated an interest in receiving travel-oriented information. A record 1.3 million visitors surfed Travel Montana's consumer websites in 1999. If current trends continue, Travel Montana predicts that around 2 million people will visit the

site in 2000. This will be a 50 percent increase from 1999.

## Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Grants

The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission and U S WEST have formed a partnership to offer grants to qualified non-profit groups undertaking Lewis & Clark-related projects. Funds can be used for building and sign construction, purchase of pertinent equipment, certain expenses related to Lewis & Clark events, and educational programs. For an application, contact the Commission's office at (406) 443-2109. Deadline for submitting grant applications is April 15, 2000. To get all the latest news on the Commission, visit [montanalewisandclark.org](http://montanalewisandclark.org).

## That's a Wrap: Film Office News

The Northern Rockies Cineposium 2000 is scheduled for May 5-7, 2000 in West Yellowstone, Montana. This fun and informative conference is a great chance to learn, meet and network with area film crew, suppliers, and all of you who are wondering how to



get in on the movie action in the state. The Montana and Wyoming Film Offices are sponsoring the conference. To learn more, contact Maribeth Goodrich at Montana's film office (406) 444-3762.

## National Tourism Week

May 7-13, 2000, is National Tourism Week. Travel Montana encourages folks around the state get the word out about how tourism benefits Montana's local and regional economies. Once you have a plan, please contact Publicity Coordinator Mary Boyle at (406) 444-1356 or e-mail [mary@visitmt.com](mailto:mary@visitmt.com) so she can incorporate your activity into the material she provides the state media.

*Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.*

## Calendar of Events

### March

- 11-15 ITB Trade Show, Berlin
- 15 Deadline for Tourism Person and Community of the Year Awards
- 16-17 RMI Sales Calls/Seminar, Paris
- 26-31 "Bistro's, Breweries, and B&B's" Media Tour, Glacier Country

### April

- 10-11 Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation, Big Sky
- 12 MTRI Working Group Meeting, Big Sky—8:30 - Noon



### Travel Montana

1424 Ninth Avenue  
PO Box 200533  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

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